



**CHRIST THE KING**



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***Encyclical of our Holy Father, Pius XI, on the  
Institution of the Feast of Christ Our King***

***Cover art taken from a hand-painted pall depicting***

***Christ the King,***

***Courtesy of Servants of the Holy Family***

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# ***CHRIST THE KING***

## ***Consecration of the Human Race to the Sacred Heart of Jesus***

### ***Official Translation of the Act***

Most Sweet Jesus, Redeemer of the Human Race, look down upon us humbly prostrate before Thy altar. We are Thine and Thine we wish to be; but, to be more surely united with Thee, behold each one of us freely consecrates himself today to Thy most Sacred Heart. Many, indeed, have never known Thee; many, too, despising Thy precepts, have rejected Thee. Have mercy on them all, most merciful Jesus, and draw them to Thy Sacred Heart.

Be Thou King, Oh Lord, not only of the faithful who have never forsaken Thee, but also of the prodigal children who have abandoned Thee; grant that they may quickly return to their Father's house lest they die of wretchedness and hunger. Be Thou King of those who are deceived by erroneous opinions, or whom discord keeps aloof, and call them back to the harbor of truth and unity of faith, so that soon there may be but one flock and one Shepherd. Be Thou King of all those who are still involved in the darkness of idolatry or of Islamism, and refuse not to draw them all into the light and kingdom of God. Turn Thine eyes of mercy toward the children of that race once Thy chosen people. Of old they called down upon themselves the Blood of the Savior; may it now descend upon them a layer of redemption and of life. Grant, Oh Lord, to Thy Church assurance of freedom and immunity from harm; give peace and order to all nations; and make the earth resound from pole to pole with one cry, "Praise to the Divine Heart that wrought our salvation; to It be glory and honor forever. Amen."

# ***CHRIST THE KING***

***(2nd EDITION--REVISED)***

## ***Introduction to the Encyclical***

The Encyclical of our Holy Father, Pius XI., on the Institution of the Feast of Christ Our King is a fitting crown to the devotion and the vast spiritual awakening that marked the Holy Year, 1925.

In fulfillment of the commission of Our Lord to Saint Peter, and aided by the light and grace that are given to every man according to his need, the Vicar of Christ addresses words of timely guidance and help to the Catholic world. We need that guidance today. In their greed for wealth, the senseless hurry of business, and the rush for pleasure men



forget, then reject, Divine things. Our superficial education, the shallow science and the sensationalism of the newspapers bewilder men's minds. They cannot think steadily and soundly; they are "tossed about by every wind of doctrine." They lose Christ--not from rebellion, but from indifference.

Man-made religions and scientific theories come and go like the leaves from spring to winter, and as they pass they leave men more and more confused. Outside the Catholic Church there is no center of spiritual authority, no institution that can claim to possess that body of truths that was the legacy of Christ to His Apostles, to be guarded by them for men through all time. There is no other infallible teacher.

Man's life must be reasonable, founded on true philosophy. For very many of those who do not recognize the Divine claims of Christ there is a philosophy of life--but it is a destructive philosophy. Its authority is unstable and uncertain, that of a learning which imposes itself on the less learned. It changes as new theories are born, but always leaves greater uncertainty, as it saps the foundations of faith and drives men to religious indifference or to skepticism.

Truth is put farther and farther away. Religion, then, and philosophy for such men come to be no more than a collection of words, of hazy definitions, of vague counsels of morality, with no firm foundation. Consequently, the law of sacrifice and the Christian moral code, so clearly stated in the teaching of Our Lord, are rejected, and men accept gladly those theories of conduct only which demand no moral effort and impose no burden of sacrifice. The God of the new philosophies is not real: He is not personal; He does not command. Christ for them is not the Divine Christ, who knew Himself to be God, who loved men, and lived and taught in Galilee with an authority which He claimed as Divine; who confirmed the Divine law and made laws as His own; whose praise and blame are for eternity; whose Kingdom we must enter by the way which He has appointed, through faith, baptism, sacrifice and good works.

The Pope, then, calls back the world to Christ Our Lord. In Him alone can man find light and peace. Christ is a Divine Fact. He made a demand on the free will of men and no proof of a claim to authority was as clear as His. Men are free to accept or reject Him, but if they reject Him the loss is theirs--the law is inexorable. As the death of the body is a fact to which men must submit, and all the thought and all the science of men cannot stop its approach, so Christ is a fact. He must reign. He is the touchstone of the world. If men trust Him, He will be their friend; if they resist Him, they must be broken.

### ***THE REIGN OF CHRIST***

At the beginning of his pontificate, in his Encyclical on, "The Peace of Christ in the Reign of Christ," the Holy Father drew attention to the evils that distract the world.



Those included the mutual distrust of nations, the growth of armaments, internal dissensions, the class struggle, the disturbance of social peace by strikes and lockouts, the growing spirit of avarice, selfishness, and the desire of pleasure. Home life is attacked in its very foundations, paternal authority is denied, conjugal faith is broken. Added to all these, is the loss in so many of the very idea of the supernatural.

Peace in this troubled state is not impossible, but it can come only when men return to Christ and obey His teaching. For Christ must reign. He must reign in the mind of man by faith, in his heart by charity, in his life by the observance of His law and the following of His example. He must reign in the family by the inviolability of the marriage bond, by the submission and the charity that are a figure of the obedience and the love of the Holy Family at Nazareth. He must reign in society by the public recognition of the moral law as His, by the full acceptance of the true principle of authority through which men admit that all power is from Him. Christ must be restored to the family, brought into the schools and into public life, and His Church must be given that place in the life of the world which belongs to the infallible centre of His teaching and the instrument of His sacramental graces.

### ***CHRIST, RULER OF THE NATIONS***

In the same spirit the Holy Father now insists that Christ Our Lord must rule over every creature, every nation, and every condition of social life. He makes the social significance of Christ more clear when he says that Christ, as Master of men, in His own unique way, has true authority over them; that the dignity and power of Christ are real and living, not as a mere example, not only through His grace. Thus He can command the obedience, devotion, and loyal service of everyone in order to hasten His coming into the fullness of His Kingdom.

In the international life of peoples, where now so often the Divine law is not recognized and the moral order finds no sanction, the influence of Christ is above all needed to bring back the reign of supernatural justice and charity. The nations want peace and try to find it in the expedients of diplomacy. Leagues for peace will succeed only when men accept the true principles of peace, which are in the teaching of Christ, and when the nations recognize the Pope, who is the teacher of morality for so many millions of their subjects.

### ***IN CHRIST THE HOPE OF SOCIAL PEACE***

In the industrial world, if only the peace of Christ were there, union and good understanding would make for more efficient production with general contentment. This has been the experience of the old Catholic days, and, later, of our own times under the Harmels at Val Des Bois, and other Catholic employers in France and elsewhere. In the



great spinning mills directed by the Harmel family since 1840 welfare associations were established long before the idea was considered practicable in England. An elaborate system of guilds, helped always by the employers and directed by committees of workers, dealt with matters of wages, insurance, shop regulations, banking, vocational training, the purchase of goods for the workpeople, and other concerns of those occupied in the - factories. Comfortable homes were built, and the whole social life was cared for. The result was a remarkable spirit of harmony and freedom from industrial troubles. Even now what is regarded as the most promising suggestion for the solution of the wage problem, the cursalaire--a system of family allowances--has come from some Catholic employers in France, whose Christian enterprise has developed into a widespread and very successful movement.

If a truly Christian spirit animated the industrial world we should have little occasion to dread the extortions of soulless corporations and the extravagances of vast world-speculation any more than the enormities of Communism, for they are but the fruit of the rejection of truth, and the introduction of false principles where religion had lost its hold on men.

In the days before the Reformation these evils were not so marked, although the root of the evils has always existed. However divided men were in race, in interests and in work, then „they were one in a common Christianity, acknowledging one Lord and His Vicar on earth. Then spiritual influences entered men’ s lives more readily, and the spirit of the Gospel could be infused into their actions. Whatever the faults of the individual, the business and social life of the nations got its inspiration from Christ Our Lord. But now, for the moment, the world has grown weary of Him and tries to free itself from His control. Even in modern religions we see trusted teachers arrogating to themselves an authority that is not theirs, and rejecting His teaching in favor of an easy morality and a service without sacrifice; while they will not, or cannot, point out the only way to peace, which is in the supernatural Kingdom of Christ.

### ***CHRIST, RULER OF STATES***

The Pope demands the public recognition of Christ Our Lord by the State, for, as He said, all power has been given to Him in Heaven and on earth. That means that He must be explicitly recognized in the public functions of the national life. Hence, in countries where the great majority of the people are professing Catholics, it is rightly expected that the nation show its faith by external acts of national worship, when rulers and people co-operate with the Church in the public religious ceremonial which the seasons and the circumstances of the time require. Where Catholics do not form the majority, they can reasonably ask their rulers for recognition of the Church and for a positive support in her public service of God and the teaching of morality. At least something more can be



asked of Christian men than a mere refusal to prevent legitimate worship. When it is rightly proposed, the public profession of faith in Divine things is in full harmony with the nature of man and can be a rock of offence to no one. Moreover, every honest man knows that true religion is the best ally of the State and should be encouraged, rather than thwarted, by those who rule.

Herein is a special duty incumbent on Catholics--to proclaim to the world the sovereignty of Christ and His law. There is no virtue in concealment, and the spirit of "peace at any price," which Catholics sometimes bring into public life, is only an unmanly abandonment of true principle, or contemptible apathy, while it is always disloyalty to Our Lord. The enemies of religion and of God could ask nothing better than that Catholics should become apologetic for their existence.

### ***THE HERESY OF SECULARISM***

The Holy Father draws our attention to what he calls the spiritual pest of our times--laicism or secularism. In 1864, Pius IX, with the spirit of the watchful pastor of souls, in his famous Syllabus, summed up the sources of these modern errors, and time has proved the accuracy of his vision and justified his action, then so bitterly attacked. In the modern States in which secularism has established itself religion has become, at best, only a matter for the private life of the individual, to be tolerated and to be regulated by secular authority. State law must prevail over Divine law. The claim of the Church to be the sole teacher of the moral law is not admitted. The sacramental nature of marriage is disregarded and the right of parents to control the education of their children rejected. Pernicious doctrines affecting the freedom and the natural rights of the weak are supported. The Church of God is no more than one of the many social groups of the State, to be controlled and regulated as they, oftentimes with far greater viciousness because of her very dignity.

The secular State arrogates to itself absolute power over its subjects, and necessarily finds itself in an impossible position--for it claims the right to set the standards of truth and morality without a mission--and it has no one on whom it can call for help. It cannot decide with justice the conflicting claims which must arise in the varied life of society--claims which often are spiritual in their origin or their relations. It professes to be neutral in matters of religion; but such neutrality does not exist, nor can it exist as men are made. Indeed, the principle of neutrality was declared by M. Viviani--a French secularist leader most prominent in recent years--to be no more than diplomatic lying and practical hypocrisy. The secularist State necessarily becomes the worst of despotisms.

The secularist ideal, besides being unjust, is unreasonable and inconsistent. God exists, and He has claims on man which He enforces; the service of God is above that of any



State. Moreover, the freedom which secularism claims for man, and on which it professes to base its opposition to religion, is an absurdity. Man's freedom of action is lessened by every added fact, his freedom of thought by every scientific and philosophical discovery. It is only the ignorant man who is free to deny what has been proved to evidence. There is a body of truth outside of man's existence, both in the temporal and in the spiritual order, which necessarily restricts his action. An external authority goes with every form of organized life, spiritual, intellectual, moral and temporal, from which man cannot withdraw and be still true to himself. It is--to use Our Lord's words--the truth that shall make men free. "Ni Dieu ni maître"--no God or master--is only the ranting of wild men; fashion, opinion, passion, disease, and death--these are men's masters. Man is truly freest when he serves God and all the world for the love of God. Even Catholics are sometimes infected with the plague of secularism; they cannot understand the "Non possumus" of the Apostle when they lose their loyalty to their Divine Master.

The State that aims at being its own master and guide in the region of morality is attempting the impossible. The freak legislation of some States on one hand and the odious tyranny of Mexico or Russia on the other are sufficient proof of the irresponsibility of legislators. The moral law is God's law, and God imposes it on men. No man can make a code of morality for himself any more than he can, in his short lifespan, win all knowledge for himself. There must be a teacher who can be trusted and who can command, but that teacher is not the State. The failure of the State as a teacher of morality is revealed in the moral anarchy seen where true religion is rejected and self-constituted guides preach the legitimacy of divorce, birth-control, and other doctrines destructive of religious and social life, and where the State itself can give no standard of moral worth that men will accept.

It is quite illogical to complain of the want of respect for law and authority, disregard for oaths, the violence of industrial disputes, the selfishness of employers or workmen, when God is rejected and the only real sanctions of the moral law are spurned, when religion is refused to the young, and those safeguards which men can find only in the supernatural cast away.

Religion--the religion that Christ Our Lord established--is the only permanent safeguard of morality through its Divine appeal and its sanctions, for God has made it so. Even now, apart from the active influence of practical believers in Christ, the only bond of Western civilization is its original Christian element, which preserves for society a remnant at least of a code of moral honor founded on the Divine law. The truth is that, without Christ, human life is one of expedients and makeshifts, having no real binding principle, and, therefore, necessarily making a constant appeal to some form of selfishness that at the very best may help to avert, for the moment only, some urgent evil.



## ***THE NEED FOR THE CHURCH***

It is evident that nothing but a Church strong in its Divine commission to teach with authority, with its control of life-giving Sacraments, can preserve a true national life, preventing degeneration and decay. Catholicism is like the sap of society; when it is vigorous it gives life to the whole body of the State, making men interest themselves unselfishly in both God and their fellow men. On the other hand, the secularist ideal degrades man by depriving him of the higher life of the soul and its aspirations towards the true perfection of humanity which religion supposes or secures. The secularist has not disproved religion by calling it superstition; the history of all that is best in the world at present and in the ages past is his enduring refutation. The so-called freedom of thought, which is the origin of secularism, is a dogma without support, unreasonable and inhuman. It solves no difficulty, explains no truth; it lives on phrases--liberty, science, brotherhood, tolerance, and the like--of which it can neither explain nor justify.

## ***WHAT THINK YOU OF CHRIST?***

Thus, the Encyclical is a challenge to men to ask themselves Our Lord's own question, "What think you of Christ?" When they realize that the only hope of true peace in their social, as in their individual, life is in Him who said, "My peace I leave you; My peace I give you," then Christ will reign over men, then liberty and authority will be respected, man's dignity will be recognized, and the wild doctrines of reformers without a mission checked. Respect for law becomes easy when law is known to be the will of God; but law cannot be respected when even the legislator knows no motive higher than force. If society will not serve Christ as its Master, nothing remains but the service of self, and that is slavery, with anarchy as its natural outcome.

## ***THE FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING***

In his insistence upon these fundamental truths the Holy Father has not desired to offer us any new idea or to suggest any new method. He only puts before us a summary of the age-long teaching of the Church. But he enforces his teaching by the authoritative institution of a new liturgical feast in honor of Christ the King of Men as a powerful means of impressing the truth on the minds of all. This is the chief purpose of the Encyclical, for, as he points out, even the noblest teaching will lose its force when it is not accompanied with some recurring commemoration. This action of the Pope has a special significance. Feasts are not thrust upon the Church. Individuals may choose their devotions according to their spiritual attraction, but a devotion accepted by the Church with the solemnity of a public celebration must have a higher justification: her liturgy



must protect and promote universal truth, according to the doctrine expressed in the formula, “lex credendi lex orandi”--devotion is an expression of doctrine.

Hence, the introduction into the liturgy of the feast of a saint or the commemoration of a doctrinal fact is no hap- hazard thing; it is an expression of the unerring devotion of the Church, and it is surrounded with the solemnity which befits the dignity of the external worship of God and of the service of the heart in faith. This is the explanation of the splendor of ritual associated with the canonization of saints and the commemorations which occur in the cycle of the liturgical year. Consequently, Catholics have a public duty to co-operate with the Church in the worship of God by surrounding her ceremonial with a splendor which will show at once their faith in God and their idea of the reverence due to Him. Thus they will give glory to God and draw others to a knowledge of Him and a desire .to worship Him which otherwise would not exist. Catholics have much to learn of the character and importance of liturgical worship as an expression of doctrine, an honor given to God, and the satisfaction of a true demand of the soul.

### ***THE DOCTRINE OF THE FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING***

The doctrine the feast commemorates is not new. The royal dignity of Christ--God and Man--arises out of His very nature. The human nature was drawn, in the ineffable ways of the Divine power, into association with the Divinity Itself in the Hypostatic Union. Through that association, the new Being, Christ Jesus, possessed the essence of God--for He was God--and, with that, all that God is. Because of the Hypostatic Union, the humanity of Our Lord shared, by communication, in the knowledge, the power, and the other gifts it was capable of receiving. Hence, He could rightly claim equality with the Father in all, as when He said, “All things are Thine, and Thine are Mine” (John 17, 10); and, again, “I and the Father are one” (John 10, 30), and, “He who sees Me sees the Father also” (John 14, 9).

### ***GROWTH OF THE NEW DEVOTION***

The promotion of the Social Reign of Christ is one of the main objects of the Apostleship of Prayer, expressed in its motto “Thy Kingdom Come.” So Our Holy Father, in his Brief granting the associates a plenary indulgence on the feast of Christ the King, says of the Apostleship, “Since its very beginning in 1844 without interruption it has had as its special purpose to promote by every means in its power the advent of the Social Reign of Our Lord in the hearts of men of all nations.” This was the master idea in all the spiritual activities of Father Ramière, who was for many years its Director. As far back as 1870 he published a work on Liberalism and the Doctrines of the Church, in which he set himself to establish the theological basis of this doctrine, and he realized it so well that



the headings of the chapters of his book read like a summary of the Encyclical of Pius XI. He associated this Kingship particularly with the devotion to the Sacred Heart for, indeed, it is a kingship of love--the reign in human hearts of Christ, who loves men. He saw, too, in it a devotion peculiarly adapted to an age marked by the spirit of industrial trouble and social unrest. Father Ramière worked much for the formal consecration of the Church to the Sacred Heart, which took place in 1875, and he was entrusted by Pius IX with the duty of preparing the act and publishing the Pontifical decision.

The devotion to Christ Our King was specially developed at the Eucharistic Congresses, the first of which was held at Lille in 1881. Successive Congresses carried on the work of study and publication, and with that grew a demand for a special feast. The Congress of Lourdes in 1914 chose as the theme of its considerations, "The Social Reign of Our Lord through the Blessed Sacrament," and one result was an appeal to the Holy Father by the Bishops who were present for the establishment of the feast. In 1889 Cardinal Sarto, later to become Pope Pius X; Cardinal Ferrari, so remarkable for his zeal and charity when Archbishop of Milan; and nearly a hundred other Bishops and Cardinals of Italy and South America, appealed to the Holy See for liturgical recognition of the doctrine. Leo XIII welcomed the appeal and referred the question to the Congregation of Rites.

In 1920, when minds could turn away from the calamities of war, a new organization, La Société du Règne Social de Jesus Christ, was founded by M. Georges de Noaillet at Paray-le-Monial. With him was his wife, who gave all her energies to the work. She was a lady of high attainments, the leader of the Catholic Women's Movement in France, noted for the brilliance and charm of her oratory, of which she gave proof in many lectures through the country for the great cause to which she had devoted herself. The interest now became world-wide. Petitions came to the Pope from nearly every country. The theology and liturgy of the question were discussed from every side. Some thought that a special feast should be assigned; others that a feast already established, like that of the Sacred Heart or the Epiphany (the manifestation of Our Lord to the Nations) should be given a special direction for the recognition of the Divine Kingship.

The crown of all this work of devotion came with the Encyclical "Quas Primas" on December 11, 1925, and the first celebration by the Pope himself of the feast with its Mass in Saint Peter's on the last day of the year.

Now, the devotion is authoritatively established and it is set firmly in the hearts of Catholics all the world over. Of this, one of the most striking proofs is that, through the long agony of the Church in Mexico, the battle cry and the salutation of Catholics--which for many splendid men and women has been the immediate cause of glorious martyrdom at the hands of the enemies of Christ--is Viva Cristo Rey!

In the Encyclical, "Annum Sacrum," Pope Leo XIII declared the Jubilee of the Holy Year 1900. He also ordered the consecration of the whole of mankind to the Sacred Heart, an



act he said was the greatest of his pontificate. To the performance of this act of love and worship he declared more than once that he had been urged by a saintly religious of the Congregation of the Good Shepherd, Sister Mary of the Divine Heart, known in the world as Countess Droste zu Vischering, who appealed to him in a touching letter to pay this act of supreme honor to Our Divine Lord. The holy Sister, after a life of great suffering and remarkable devotion, died at the first vespers of the triduum preparatory to the universal consecration--as if her life's work had been completed when this honor to the Divine Master was assured.

Explaining the nature of the consecration, the Holy Father says, "By devoting ourselves to Our Lord we not only openly and gladly recognize His authority, but we also by our act show, even if our life were truly ours to give, we would give it to Him most readily. As in the symbol of the Sacred Heart, we have a sign of the infinite love of Christ which moves us to love Him in return, so it is quite in harmony with that love that we should consecrate ourselves altogether to His Divine Heart. That means no more and no less than that we give ourselves to Our Lord and bind ourselves to love and honor Him. For this reason, we urge all those who know and love Him to devote themselves with all good will. It is our most earnest wish that, by their common action on the day on which the world is consecrated to the Sacred Heart, the prayers of so many thousands, expressing the same devotion, should reach the temple of their Father in Heaven together.

"The consecration to the Sacred Heart gives us confidence also in an improvement in the conditions of public life, since it must restore, or make closer, the union which should naturally exist between the State and God. In our times there is, as it were, a wall set up between the Church and the State. In the constitution and the direction of States the authority of the Divine law is despised, because of the prevailing idea that religion should have no bearing on public life. Hence the Christian faith is rejected and God is driven from the earth. If minds are so elated with arrogance, we need not wonder at all the troubles among the nations, when no one can be free from danger or without fear of evil. The soundest bases of public safety must fail when religion is despised, whilst God will hand traitors over as victims to their own desires, to serve their passions and destroy themselves with too much liberty. Their only help and security is in Christ, for there is no other name under the heavens given to men by which we can be saved (2 Acts 4, 2). They must have recourse to Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. They have gone astray; they must return to the right path. Their minds are darkened; they must clear away the darkness with the light of truth. Death has seized upon them; they must grasp the true life. Then, at last, all wounds shall be healed, then justice shall be strong again in its pristine power, then the glory of peace shall be restored and the sword drop from the hand of man, when all gladly accept the rule of Christ and submit to Him, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2, 11).



## ***CONSECRATION OF COUNTRIES***

In Ireland in 1873, on Passion Sunday, in response to a united pastoral of the Bishops, the whole Irish people, meeting in the various parishes, consecrated themselves to the Sacred Heart, first as a nation and then by dioceses. The people were moved to this act of devotion--which was both an expression of and guarantee of their faith--by the persecution of the Church in Germany during the Kulturkampf. Also in 1873 that remarkable man, Garcia Moreno, President of Ecuador, consecrated his State and solemnized the consecration by legal enactment. San Salvador followed this good example in 1874, and then Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Colombia. In 1917 the Countess of Luxemburg dedicated herself and her people to the Sacred Heart and in 1919 King Alfonso devoted Spain with magnificent ceremonies. In 1920 Poland followed and in 1921 Costa Rica. Brazil and Malta were consecrated in 1922. The formal consecration of Catholic Australia was made by order of the Bishops in 1919, but there had been partial consecrations of dioceses or States much earlier.

Besides the consecration of nations, many public acts of recognition of the authority of Christ Our Lord were solemnized by the Bishops and people of various countries. In France the splendid Church of the National Vow was dedicated to the Sacred Heart at Montmartre; in Belgium the national basilica at Koekelberg, near Brussels, was consecrated by Cardinal Mercier in presence of the King and Queen and a great assemblage, and at the same time Belgium dedicated itself to the Sacred Heart. In Uruguay a great votive temple was begun in 1919. As, in 1904, the remarkable statue of Christ of the Andes was set up in the mountains on the dividing line between Chile and Argentina, to be a memorial of the ratification of an enduring peace, a similar statue was erected recently on the Hill of Saint Thomas, in Paraguay. A like act of devotion is being offered in the city of San Sebastian, near Rio Janeiro. In Mexico, in spite of violent opposition from the atheist Government, over a hundred and fifty thousand people met at Cubilete--a name then changed to The Hill of Christ the King--to proclaim His royal rights in reparation for the sacrileges and the other acts of impiety committed by His enemies during these years.

## ***CONSECRATION OF THE HOME***

The consecration of homes goes farther back into history than the consecration of States. Since the days of Saint Margaret Mary the new spirit infused into the devotion of the people, and the promise of Our Lord in favor of those who honored His Sacred Heart in the home, led to the formal consecration of the home itself. The consecration of families is being actively promoted over the whole world by the Apostleship of Prayer, with remarkable proofs of devotion. This act is, in the words of Pope Benedict XV., "more opportune in our times than ever before, when men are trying to destroy in private as well



as in public life the moral code of the Church. Impious men are attacking the home in particular, for it has in it the source of society; they hope to ruin the State by corrupting the family. We have, then, a definite duty--it is not a matter merely of walking in the train of Christ with the vague sentimentalism of tender hearts." A religion that is identified with mere sentiment, and is not the vigorous expression of a truth, is defective at least, if it is not wrong. It cannot lead us to do good works and avoid evil, as Christ requires of us when He tells us to take up our cross. The fruit of consecration is devotion, and the fruit of true devotion to the Sacred Heart is sacrifice and zeal and love--"tepid souls shall become fervent."

### ***THE CATHOLIC APOSTOLATE***

Some Catholics will say that this revolution wished for by the Pope is a dream, for the selfishness of the world cannot be overcome. That is the heresy of distrust, the disbelief in the power of Christ to touch the souls of men. If they only looked deeper they would see that the world is looking for the peace of Christ. It knows its weakness, its vice, its deceptions, and it is waiting for another Saint Francis, with his detachment, for another Saint Paul with his fiery zeal, to give it back the spirit of Christ. The Encyclical is the condemnation of the disloyal and the spiritless Catholic, as it is of the atheistic secularist.

If men who hate Christ try to cast Him out of the home, those who love Him will keep Him there. So they must know His Divine teaching on the supernatural life, on respect for His Church, on the Divine source of all authority, on the inviolability of marriage, on the priceless worth of a human soul--those things that, Saint Paul says, pass the understanding of the sensual man.

They must bring that knowledge, too, into the lives of men, and be apostles of Christ by example and precept in the crowded cities of our new civilization. There men's souls are neglected; men are hungering for good, but they are not shown where its true source lies. True Catholics must fight secularism. Secularism is driving the world into indifference for Christ or paganism, by the influence of a genuinely good and holy life and an apostolic zeal for the Reign of Christ. This is a true apostolate of the modern layman to the world--the apostolate of example, and the wider apostolate of service in the cause of a real King, who admits men to His court more readily and more intimately than any, even the least, of the world's potentates.

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***ENCYCLICAL OF OUR HOLY FATHER PIUS XI  
TO THE HIERARCHY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ON THE  
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE  
FEAST OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD AND KING***

Venerable Brethren, in the first letter, We addressed to the Bishops of the whole Church, We dwelt upon the causes of the difficulties with which mankind is struggling. Then, We said that these various evils had come into the world because so many men had in their private lives rejected Jesus Christ and His holy law, and thrust Him out of the life of the family and of the State. We said, further, that there was no clear hope of lasting peace among the nations as long as individuals and States rejected the rule of Our Divine Savior. Therefore, We urged the world to seek the peace of Christ in the reign of Christ, and promised that We Ourselves would do so as far as it is in Our power. Peace in the reign of Christ We said, because, clearly, peace cannot be more effectually restored and confirmed than through the establishment of the rule of Our Lord. Since that time, We have been urged to hope for a brighter future through a new, and much keener, interest shown by the world in Christ and His Church, the one instrument of salvation. In this, We saw proof that men, who before had spurned the authority of their Redeemer and exiled themselves from His Kingdom, were now happily preparing their return to their duty of obedience.

***PREPARATION FOR THE NEW FEAST***

Many notable and memorable events which have occurred during the course of the year have added much to the honor and glory of the Divine Founder of the Church, our Lord and King. Men have been deeply impressed by the public exhibition of the missionary life of the Church. They have seen how consistently the Church is working to spread in every land, even to the most distant islands of the ocean, more widely every day the Kingdom of her Spouse. They have seen how many countries have been won to the Catholic Faith by the labors and the sacrifices of brave and invincible missionaries. They have seen, as well, the vast regions which still remain to be made subject to the saving and kindly rule of Our King. Again, the chief aim of all those who, led by their Bishops and priests, flocked to Rome from all countries during the Holy Year was to purify their souls, and at the Tomb of the Apostles, in Our presence, to proclaim their loyalty to the rule of Christ.

A new splendor was shed upon Christ's Kingdom when, after proof of their remarkable virtue, We raised to the honors of the altar six holy confessors and virgins. Great joy and consolation filled Our heart when, in the noble temple of Saint Peter, immense multitudes



acclaimed Our decrees with thanksgiving in the words of the “Te Deum,” “Thou, Christ, art King of Glory.” Our joy was great because, at a time when men and States are cut off from God and are driving to their ruin in hate and discord, the Church of God continues to offer the food of the spiritual life to all men, and nurtures for Christ generations of holy men and women, whom He is ever calling, as His most faithful and obedient subjects in His earthly kingdom, to the eternal happiness of His Kingdom in Heaven.

Again, as the sixteenth centenary of the Council of Nicaea occurred within the Jubilee Year, We ordered the event to be celebrated, and We commemorated it in the Vatican Basilica. This We did with all the greater pleasure as it was that Synod which defined as an article of Catholic faith that the Only-begotten Son is of one substance with the Father, and added to the Creed the words, “Of whose Kingdom there shall be no end,” thus affirming the royal dignity of Christ.

Since, therefore, this Holy Year has offered Us more than one opportunity to shed glory on the Kingdom of Christ, We consider it a duty in keeping with Apostolic office to accede to the prayers of many of the Cardinals, Bishops, and the faithful, expressed to Us both individually and collectively, by closing this Holy Year with the introduction into the sacred liturgy of a special feast in honor of Jesus Christ Our Lord and King. This matter is so dear to Our heart, Venerable Brethren, that We will address to you a few words concerning it. Afterwards it will be for you to explain to the faithful in a fitting manner what We say of the worship of Christ Our King, so that much good may attend the celebration of the feast which We shall decree.

Men have been for long accustomed to give to Christ the title of King because of the perfection through which He excels all creatures. Thus He is said to reign over the minds of men, not so much by the clearness of His intellect and the extent of His knowledge as because He is very Truth, and it is from Him that they must receive the truth with submission. He reigns, too, in the wills of men, because in Him the human will corresponds with perfect rectitude and submission to the Divine, and, further, by the movements and inspirations of His grace, He so supports our wills that we can be stirred to the very noblest efforts. Christ is King of the hearts of men as well because of His charity, which exceeds all knowledge (Eph. 3, 19), and of His mercy and goodness, which draw all men to Him, for no other has been, or ever shall be, loved by the world of men as Christ Jesus. When we consider the matter closely we see clearly that Christ Our Lord claims both the name and the power of King in the truest sense. It is only as man that He can be said to have received from the Father power and glory and kingship (Dan. 7, 14), since the Divine Word, who is of the same substance as the Father, has all in common with the Father, and therefore has supreme and absolute power over all creatures.

Throughout the Scriptures we read that Christ is King. He it is who shall come, a ruler, out of Jacob (Num. 24, 19), who has been set by the Father as King over Zion, His holy



mountain, and who shall have the nations as His inheritance and the world to its farthest ends as His domain (Ps. 2). He is the true King of Israel to come, of whom, in the figure of a rich and powerful king, the nuptial canticle sings, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; the scepter of Thy kingdom is a scepter of righteousness" (Ps. 44). Passing over many similar passages, we come to another in which the Psalmist describes more clearly the form of Christ and says that His Kingdom shall know no end and shall be enriched with the treasures of justice and peace, "In His day justice shall rise up and abundance of peace. He shall rule from sea-to-sea and from the river to the ends of the earth" (Ps. 71).

We have the still more abundant testimony of the Prophets. That of Isaiah is well known, "For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us; the weight of empire is upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, God the Mighty One, Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace. His empire shall be spread afar, and of its peace there shall be no end. He shall sit upon the throne of David and over His Kingdom, to establish it and strengthen it with judgment and justice from henceforth and forever" (Isai. 9, 6, 7). The other Prophets speak in the same way. Jeremiah tells us of the „just seed" that shall rise in the House of David, the Son of David who shall rule as king with great wisdom, and who shall establish justice upon the earth (Jer. 23, 5). Daniel speaks of a kingdom that shall be founded by the God of Heaven, which shall never be over thrown, but shall last forever (Dan. 2, 44). Again, he says, "I saw a vision of the night, and, lo! one like the Son of Man came in the clouds of heaven, and he came even to the Ancient of Days, and they presented him before Him. And He gave him power and glory and a kingdom; and all peoples and races and tongues shall serve him. His power is an everlasting power that shall not be taken away, and his rule shall never be destroyed" (Dan. 7, 13, 14). The holy Evangelists have recognized the fulfillment of the prophecy of Zachary, who tells of a gentle King, riding upon an ass, entering Jerusalem as the Just One and the Savior amid the acclamations of the multitude (Zach. 9, 9).

The doctrine of the Kingship of Christ, thus declared in the Old Testament, finds a clear and glorious confirmation in the New. In the message of the Archangel Our Lady is told that she is to bear a Son, to whom "the Lord God shall give the seat of David His father; He shall reign in the House of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1, 32, 33). Christ Himself speaks of His Sovereignty in His last discourse to the people, when He told them of the rewards of the just and the punishments of the wicked; in His answer to the Roman governor, who had asked Him if He were a king; and after His Resurrection, when He gave to His Apostles the commission to teach and to baptize all, nations. When the occasion arose He claimed for Himself the name of King, and He publicly stated that He was a King (Matt. 25, 31, 40; John 18, 37); whilst He solemnly declared that all power was given to Him in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28, 18). These words can have no other meaning than that His power is mighty and His kingdom without end.



We need not wonder, then, that He, whom Saint John calls Prince of the Kings of the Earth, should be He who in the vision of the future shown to the Apostle has on His garment written and on His thigh, King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Apoc. 19, 16), for the Father has appointed Christ heir of all (Heb. 1, 2), and He must reign until He has put all His enemies under the feet of God the Father (1 Cor. 15, 25).

In view of this teaching of the Holy Scriptures, the Catholic Church, which is the kingdom of Christ on earth, to be spread through all the nations of the world, must proclaim her Author and her Founder with every mark of veneration in the yearly cycle of her liturgy as King and Lord, the King of kings. This homage, telling the same truth in admirable variety of forms, offered in the ancient psalmody and sacramentaries, she still offers in her ritual of public prayer to the Divine Majesty, and in the Holy Sacrifice of the Immaculate Victim. In this perpetual praise of Christ Our King, we find the harmony of Oriental liturgies with our own, verifying once more the maxim, "The rule of worship tells us the rule of faith."

Saint Cyril of Alexandria rightly declares the foundation of this power and dignity of Our Lord when He says that He has dominion over all creatures, not won by force, not received from another, but essentially His own through His Divine nature and substance (In Luc. 10). In other words, His Kingship is founded on the Hypostatic Union. Hence, not only is Christ as God adored by angels and men, but also to Him as man angels and men are subject, and they must recognize His power; because of the Hypostatic Union Christ has authority over all creatures.

For us, however, it is a happy and a consoling thought that Christ is our King, not only by His natural right as God, but also by right that He has won, for He has redeemed us. If only forgetful men would remember how much we owe to Our Divine Savior! "You are not redeemed with corruptible gold and silver, but with the precious Blood of Christ, the Lamb unspotted and undefiled" (1 Peter 1, 18.X). We are no longer our own, for Christ has bought us at a great price (1 Cor. 6, 20); our very bodies are members of Christ (1 Cor. 6, 15).

### ***NATURE OF THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST***

We will now explain briefly the nature and the meaning of this Kingship of Christ. It consists, We need hardly say, in the threefold power which is essential to authority--the power to make laws, to judge, and to administer the law. His authority is very clear from the testimony that the Holy Scriptures give to the universal rule of our Redeemer. It is, besides, a doctrine of Catholic faith that Christ Jesus, given to men as a Redeemer in whom they should put their trust, is also a Lawgiver whom they should obey (Council Trent, Sess. 6, Can. 21). The Gospels show Him to us, not only as having made laws,



but also as actually making them. The Divine Master Himself on many occasions, and in different circumstances, declared that men, by keeping His law, prove their love for Him, and shall be confirmed in His love (John 14, 15; 15, 10).

Jesus claimed to have received from His Father the power to judge men. When the Jews accused Him of violating the Sabbath rest by the miraculous healing of a sick man, He answered, "The Father does not judge any man, but He has given all judgment to the Son" (John 5, 22). In this power must be included the right to reward and to punish all living men, for this right is inseparable from judicial power.

Christ also has executive power, for all men are bound to obey His commands; nor can anyone escape His authority or the punishments which are the sanction of His laws for those who are obstinate in disobedience.

The authority of Christ as King is in a special sense spiritual and concerned with spiritual things. This fact is clear from the texts of the Holy Scriptures mentioned above, and it is confirmed by the actions of Our Lord Himself. More than once, when the Jews, and even the Apostles, wrongly thought that the Messiah would restore the kingdom of Israel and free its people, He repelled the idea and destroyed their empty hopes. When the admiring multitude wished to proclaim Him their king He fled from them and hid Himself, to avoid both the title and the honor; and afterwards He declared to the Roman Governor that His kingdom was not of this world. The Gospels propose to us a kingdom such that those who would enter it must prepare themselves by penance, and that no one can enter it without faith and baptism--an external rite which both signifies and causes a new birth in the soul. This spiritual kingdom is the enemy of none but that of Satan and the powers of darkness. It requires of its subjects detachment of heart from riches and other earthly things, with the spirit of gentleness and hunger and thirst for justice, while all must bear their cross in self-denial. Since Christ won the souls of all men through His blood as Redeemer, and offered Himself, and is continually offering Himself, for the sins of men as Priest, it is quite evident that His kingly dignity is spiritual as these are.

While the authority of Our Lord is spiritual, it would be a grave mistake to say that Christ, as man, has no authority in civil matters, for He has received from God absolute power over all things created, and everything is subject to Him. Still, while He lived on earth, He abstained from the exercise of that power; and although He disdained to own material things or to care for them, He allowed those who had them to remain their owners, and He does so still. In this it is well said: He takes away no mortal crown who gives the crown of life eternal (Hymn for the Epiphany).

Thus the empire of Our Savior embraces all men. Here, We freely make Our own the words of Our predecessor, Leo XIII, of immortal memory, "His empire is not limited to Catholic nations, or to those only who, by their baptism, belong to the Church but have



been led astray by error or separated by schism; it embraces also those who have no part in the Christian faith. The Kingdom of Christ is the whole world of man” (Enc. “Annum Sacrum,” 25th May, 1899).

In this there is no difference between the individual, the family, and the State, since men grouped in societies are no less subject to Christ than individuals. He is the salvation of all, “Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4, 12). The same Christ is the Author of the happiness and true prosperity of both subjects and States, “A nation is happy when the people are happy, for the nation is only the people living in harmony” (Saint Augustine Ep. ad Macedonia).

If, therefore, rulers of States wish to promote and increase the prosperity of their people and to preserve their own authority, they must not refuse to show in themselves and by their people respect and obedience to the rule of Christ. What We wrote at the beginning of Our pontificate about the great decline in respect for government and the authority of the law is equally suited to the conditions of the present day. We wrote, “When God and Jesus Christ are banished from public life, when authority is considered as derived from men, and not from God, the very foundations of authority are destroyed, because the main reason why some have the right to command and others the duty to obey has been rejected. Then society necessarily falls, since it has no solid support and protection” (Enc. “Ubi Arcano”).

### ***THE SOCIAL BENEFITS OF THE RULE OF CHRIST***

As soon as men recognize the authority of Christ in their public and private lives, very real blessings, as true liberty, discipline, peace and harmony, will infallibly spread through the whole of society, for this royal dignity of Our Lord will Invest the human authority of rulers with a religious character, and ennoble the duties and the obedience of subjects as well. So Saint Paul, when ordering wives to honor Christ in their husbands and slaves to respect Him in their masters, warned them not to obey these as men but only because they are in the place of Christ. It is not fitting that men redeemed by Christ should be slaves of their fellow-men, “You are bought at a price; be not the bond-slaves of men” (1 Cor. 7, 23).

If those in authority were convinced that they were ruling by the command and in the place of their Divine King, and not in their own right, their wisdom in making laws and administering them and their regard for the general good and the human dignity of their subjects would be evident to all. Then peace and good order would flourish and persist, since every cause of discontent would have been removed. Even when subjects find in



their rulers only men like themselves, and perhaps unworthy and deserving of blame, they will not for that reason resist their authority if they see in them the figure of Christ, God and Man, and His Divine command.

When we consider peace and harmony among men, we see that the wider an empire extends, and the greater the number of its subjects, the more fully are men aware of the bond which unites them, and this consciousness will either prevent many conflicts or lessen their bitterness. If, then, the rule of Christ extended over all men really as it does by right, we should not despair of seeing the realization of that peace which the King of Peace came to bring on earth. He came to win all to the Father (Col. 1, 20), not to be served, but to serve; and, though He was Lord of all, He gave Himself an example of humility, which He made, together with charity, His chief commandment, and He added that His yoke is sweet and His burden light. Great indeed would be the happiness of men if only individuals and families and nations would allow themselves to be ruled by Christ. "Then, at last," to use the words of Leo XIII., "shall all wounds be healed; then shall law recover its native vigor and its original authority, the blessings of peace be restored, and the sword fall from the hand of man, when all gladly submit to the rule of Christ, and every voice proclaims that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father" (Enc. "Annum Sacrum").

### ***INSTITUTION OF THE FEAST OF CHRIST OUR KING***

In order that these blessings may abound and endure in Christian society, the royal dignity of Our Savior must be recognized and understood as widely as possible, and nothing can serve this purpose more effectually than the institution of a special feast in honor of the Kingship of Christ. If men are to be penetrated with the truths of faith, and, through them, brought to the happiness of the interior life, the annual celebration of the Sacred Mysteries is far more effective than even the most solemn declarations of ecclesiastical teaching, for these, as a rule, reach only a small number, who are also the best informed, whereas feasts move and teach all the faithful. The former speak but once, the latter every year and for all time. Teaching has its greatest influence on the mind, but the liturgy moves with salutary effect both body and soul; for man, composed of body and soul, is stirred by external solemnities to a fuller acceptance of the Divine teaching through the variety and beauty of the sacred rites. In this way doctrine becomes, as it were, part of man himself, and he can make use of it for the good of his spiritual life.

We know from history that sacred festivals have been introduced in the course of ages according as the spiritual needs or the advantage of Christianity demanded, when the people needed strength in the face of a common peril, or when they were to be protected against the errors of new heresies; or, again, when they were to be stirred to a closer consideration of a mystery of faith or some divine blessing. Thus, in the earliest ages of



the Church, during the bitter persecutions of the Christians, the worship of the martyrs was instituted in order that, as Saint Augustine says, “the feasts of the martyrs might incite men to martyrdom.” When, later, liturgical honors were paid to confessors, virgins, and other holy persons, they helped very much to stir up in the hearts of the faithful the zeal for virtue that is so necessary even in times of peace.

Still more effective were the feasts instituted in honor of Our Lady. Through these the Christian people honored the Mother of God with greater devotion as their most helpful advocate, and loved her as a mother left to them in the last will of their Redeemer.

Not the least of the blessings which have come from this public honor rightly paid to the Mother of God and the saints is the fact that the Church has ever been preserved from the taint of error and heresy. In this, We must admire the wisdom of the Providence of God, who, drawing good out of evil, has from time to time permitted the faith and piety of the Catholic people to grow lax, and false teaching to attack Catholic truth. But this has always been with the result that truth shines out with added brightness, and faith awakened strives after nobler and holier aims.

Not unlike the older feasts in their origin and their results are those solemnities which have been introduced into the annual course of the liturgy in more recent times. When reverence and devotion to the Most Holy Sacrament had diminished, the newly-instituted Feast of Corpus Christi, with all its ceremonial splendor and its devotions prolonged through the octave, recalled the people to the public worship of Our Lord. So, too, the Feast of the Sacred Heart was instituted when the hearts of men, distressed by the gloom and the severity of Jansenism, had grown cold, and Christians were shut out from the love of God and hope of their salvation.

### ***A REMEDY AGAINST THE HERESY OF OUR DAY***

It is Our duty now to minister to the needs of the present day and to provide an effective remedy against the plague that has corrupted modern society. That plague is secularism, with its errors and its impious activities, and to combat it We ordain the special worship of Christ Our King by the whole Catholic world. That pest, as you know, Venerable Brethren, has not grown up in one day, but it has been long nurtured in the heart of governments. The beginning was in the rejection of the rule of Christ over the public life of nations. Men denied the right of the Church, given by Christ Himself, to teach mankind, to make laws, to govern her own people in their religious life, to lead them to their eternal happiness. Then, little by little, the true religion came to be assimilated to false religions, and to be put on the same level with them; it was made subject to the civil power and given over to the whims of princes and rulers. Some went even further, and



wished to substitute for the religion of Christ some form of natural religion, or mere sentiment. Some governments even thought that they could do without God, and made their religion consist in impiety and contempt for Him.

We deplored the bitter fruits of this revolt from Christ in men and States in Our Encyclical, "Ubi Arcano," and, still, We deplore them. Everywhere the seeds of discord are sown, the fires of hatred and of fierce rivalry between nations are fanned, and the restoration of peace after the war has been long delayed. On all sides is cupidity unrestrained, concealing itself often under the mask of patriotism and the general good, with its accompaniment of discord amongst the people and a blind and boundless selfishness which looks for nothing but private advantage, and measures everything by personal gain. The bitter fruits of this heresy are seen, too, in the ruin of domestic peace, when men have forgotten or neglected -their duty in the home; the union and stability of the family are undermined--society, in a word, is shaken to its foundations and threatened with ruin.

But we have the strongest hope that the annual celebration of the Feast of Christ Our King will hasten the return of the world to its Divine Savior; and it is the duty of every Catholic to hasten that return still more with his own active efforts. Many, it is true, have not that place in society, or that authority, which should belong to those who bear the torch of truth. This disadvantage of good souls is to be attributed, in some measure, to the timidity or the ignorance of men who will not stand up against evil, or who only weakly resist it. So the enemies of the Church necessarily become bolder in their rash attacks.

But if the faithful understood that it is their duty always to fight bravely under the royal banner of Christ, they would set alight in themselves the fire of apostles, A Catholic and strive to win back to their Master the Crusade, hearts of the ignorant and of those who are estranged from Him, and they would use every effort to maintain His rights inviolate.

Moreover, the universal celebration of this yearly solemnity will do much to make men realize, and in some way supply for, the revolt from Christ which secularism has brought about with results so disastrous to society. While national councils and parliaments, by their unworthy silence, insult the holy name of our Redeemer, we should all the more openly acclaim it, and more widely assert the rights of the royal dignity of Christ and His authority.

### ***GROWTH OF THE WORSHIP OF CHRIST OUR KING.***

From the closing years of the nineteenth century we see the way providentially prepared for the institution of this feast. It is well known with what learning this devotion has been taught in works composed in different languages in so many countries of the world.



Moreover, a more general recognition of the authority and the royal dignity of Our Lord has been won by the growth of the pious custom through which an immense number of families have been consecrated to the Sacred Heart. Not only have families thus dedicated themselves, but cities also and kingdoms; while in the year 1900 the whole world was, at the instance of Leo XIII., consecrated to the Divine Heart.

We must not overlook the impulse which the many Eucharistic Congresses have given to the solemn recognition of the authority of Christ over society, for the purpose of these assemblies of dioceses or nations is to venerate Christ Our King, hidden under the Eucharistic veils, and by addresses, by solemn Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, by splendid ceremonial, to salute Christ, given us by God as Our King. So it can be said with truth that Christ's people are by a divine impulse bringing Him out of the retirement and the sacred silence of His temples and carrying Him in triumph through the highways, thus restoring Him to His royal rights, when impious men will not receive Him as He comes to His own.

The Holy Year, now coming to a close, offers Us an excellent opportunity of fulfilling the plan of which We have spoken. God, in His great goodness, has during this year called the minds and hearts of men to the consideration of those supernatural blessings which are above all understanding. Some He has restored to His grace; others He has confirmed in the way of righteousness, with motives to strive for the higher gifts. Whether We consider the appeals made to Us in such numbers, or the events of the Holy Year itself, We have good reason for Our conviction that at last the day desired by all has come, on which We can solemnly declare that Christ is to be worshipped as King of all men with the solemnity of a special feast.

### ***INSTITUTION OF THE FEAST***

In this year, as We have already said, the Divine King, who is truly wonderful in His saints, has been gloriously magnified by the addition to His army of a new band of soldiers inscribed on the list of His saints. During this year, too, at Rome, men have been able, through an unaccustomed view of facts in the lives of missionaries, and almost of their actual labors, to realize and to admire the victories won by the heralds of the Gospel in the spreading of His Kingdom; whilst in the centenary celebrations of the Council of Nicaea We commemorated the doctrine of faith that the Word Incarnate is consubstantial with the Father, which is the foundation of Christ's authority over men.

Therefore, by Our Apostolic authority, We institute the Feast of Jesus Christ, Our Lord and King, and order it to be celebrated every year on the last Sunday in October, the Sunday immediately preceding the Solemnity of All the Saints. We further ordain that every year on that day there shall be a renewal of the consecration of the whole world to



the Sacred Heart, as prescribed by Our predecessor of holy memory, Pius X. For this year only, We desire that the feast be observed on the thirty-first of December, on which day We shall offer the Holy Sacrifice with full pontifical rites in honor of Christ Our King, and We shall order that the consecration of all mankind be made in Our presence. It seems to Us that We cannot close the Holy Year in a more fitting way, or give better testimony of Our gratitude, and that of all men, for the blessings bestowed during the year upon Us, the Church, and the whole Catholic world.

We need not explain to you, Venerable Brethren, at any length the reasons for decreeing a new feast, distinct from other feasts of Our Lord, in which His royal dignity is in some way represented and celebrated. We would remark only that, though the material object, as it is called, of every feast is Our Lord Himself, the formal object of this feast differs from that of other feasts by the representation of His authority and His title of King.

We have set aside a Sunday for the celebration so not only the clergy may offer their service of sacrifice and praise, but the laity also, freed from their customary occupations, may, in the spirit of holy joy, give fuller proof of their obedience to Christ Our Lord and their service of Him. The last Sunday of October seemed to be the most suitable for this purpose, as then the course of the liturgical year is nearing its end, and so the mysteries of the life of Our Lord which are celebrated throughout the year will be completed with the crowning glory of His royal authority; whilst before we celebrate the Feast of All the Saints we shall extol the praise of Him who triumphs in the glory of His elect.

It shall, then, be your duty, Venerable Brethren, to prepare for the annual celebration of the feast with instructions on fixed days in every parish, so that your people may be well informed in the nature, the meaning, and the importance of the feast, and order their lives in a manner worthy of those who offer faithful and honest service to their Divine King.

### ***HOPES FOR THE FUTURE***

As we close Our letter, Venerable Brethren, We would say in few words what advantages We promise Ourselves shall come from this public worship of Our Divine Lord and King to the Church, to society, and to all the faithful.

When We pay this honor to Our Divine King men will be reminded that the Church, which has been established as a perfect and independent society, by her natural and inalienable right demands from the State full liberty and immunity. She cannot depend upon the will of any other in the office divinely entrusted to her of teaching, ruling and guiding to their eternal happiness all who are of Christ's Kingdom.



Moreover, the State must allow a similar liberty to the religious Orders and Associations, which are very efficient helpers of the pastors of the Church in their work for the promotion and establishment of the Kingdom of Christ. By their bond of the religious vows they fight against the triple concupiscence of the world, the flesh and the devil, and by the profession of the more, perfect life they secure that the holiness which the Divine Founder of the Church ordained as one of her marks shall shine before the world with ever-increasing brightness.

The public celebration of this feast, renewed every year, must remind statesmen that rulers as well as private individuals are bound to offer public worship and service to Christ Our Lord. It must recall to their minds the Last Judgment, when Christ Our Lord, now banished from the public life of the nations and contemptuously neglected and ignored, will punish severely all those insults. His royal dignity demands that the State shall be guided by the Commandments of God and by Christian principles in its legislation, its administration of justice, and its training of children in sound doctrine and morality.

The faithful, also, from meditation on these truths will gain much in spiritual strength and virtue to form their lives in harmony with the true spirit of Christ. If all power in heaven and on earth is given to Christ Our Lord; if men, redeemed by His blood, are made subject to Him by a new right; if His rule extends over all mankind, it will be clear to all that there is nothing which is not subject to His authority. Christ, then, must reign in the minds of men, in the sense that all with perfect submission must assent firmly and constantly to revealed truths and to all His teaching. He must reign in the wills of men by their obedience to the Divine commands. He must reign in the hearts of men who will love God above all without regard to natural desires. He must reign in our bodies and in all our members, which must serve as instruments, or, in the words of Saint Paul, as arms of justice unto God (Rom. 6, 13), for the sanctification of our souls. If these truths are proposed to the faithful for close consideration and meditation, it will be much easier to lead them to the highest perfection.

May God grant, Venerable Brethren, that those who are without the fold may seek out and take up the sweet yoke of Christ for their salvation, and that all of those who, in the merciful designs of God, are of His household may bear that yoke, not as a heavy burden, but with joy and love, and with devotion. So, when we have lived our lives according to the laws of the Kingdom of God, we shall receive the reward of good in the fullest abundance and be counted by Christ among His faithful servants, to share with Him in the everlasting glory and happiness of His Kingdom in Heaven.



Accept, Venerable Brethren, this Our prayer in token of Our fatherly charity as the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord draws near; and receive as a pledge of heavenly blessings the Apostolic Benediction, which with all Our heart We impart to you, to your clergy, and to your people.

Saint Peter's, Rome,  
the Eleventh day of December in the Holy Year,  
the fourth year of Our Pontificate.

PIUS XI, POPE

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